Keeping in Touch

News and notes from
the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches

September 1992

Elders Proclaim a Vision "For All The Nations"

"For all the nations: celebrating 25 years of ministry" will be the theme of the 1993 General Conference, the UFMCC Board of elders decided during a productive meeting Aug. 3-7 in Los Angeles, CA.

The elders also considered new visions for denominational structures and systems, recommitted themselves to World Church Extension, and examined the role of elders in UFMCC.

General Conference Planned

"That theme emerged from the awareness of the concept of a gay and lesbian nation and our sense of being called to bring an inclusive Gospel message to a people that has been excluded," said Rev. Elder Don Eastman, second vice moderator. "In all the various nations, gay and lesbian people represent a distinctive subcultural grouping, an *ethni* — that's the Greek word that's usually translated as nation."

He noted that this concept of nation is the subject of a pamphlet by Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson, soon to be published by UFMCC. The theme, which comes from Matthew 28:19, also conveys the fact that UFMCC has become an international denomination with churches in 18 countries.

General Conference XVI, which will be held in Phoenix, AZ, in 1993, will feature UFMCC's 25th anniversary celebration. The elders also decided to add a special emphasis on youth programming at this conference. Rev. Wilson will spearhead creation of a Youth Day during the conference.

Structures and Systems Studied

"The Board of Elders had a superb dialogue with ETFSS (Elders' Task Force on Structures and Systems) around structural issues affecting the future of UFMCC, the most challenging of which is how we function as an international fellowship," Rev. Eastman said.

ETFSS presented the elders with preliminary results from its surveys, recommendations based on those results, and plans to facilitate Fellowship-wide deliberation to effect appropriate changes. The findings and plans of ETFSS will be presented in detail in future issues of *Keeping in Touch*.

World Church Extension Affirmed

"The elders devoted substantial time to strategies for increased giving to World Church Extension (WCE)," Rev. Eastman said. "We noted that WCE had made significant gains in contributed income by comparison with previous years. We averaged close to $4,000 a month in contributions. This is half the current budgeted need."

Rev. Eastman pointed out that 67 churches gave identifiable support to WCE in 1991. "That's less than a third of our churches. If we could get all of our churches to do something for WCE on a consistant, regular basis, this program could receive the adequate funding it so urgently needs. The entire Board of Elders

(see Elders, page 2)

Photo by Ms. Carol Hale

Students from diverse backgrounds joined together to study at Samaritan College's 1992 Orientation program in San Rafael, CA.

Samaritan Sets New Records

Samaritan College's 1992 Orientation to MCC Pastoring program had its highest-ever student enrollment and number of locations this year.

Orientation, a requirement for licensing as UFMCC clergy, was held in San Rafael, CA; Atlanta, GA; Dallas, TX; and Guadalajara, Mexico, in June, July and August.

A total enrollment of 78 included 56 students from the United States, 18 from Mexico and four from Canada.

The 1992 Orientation program also enrolled the largest number of people of color ever,

(see Samaritan, page 2)

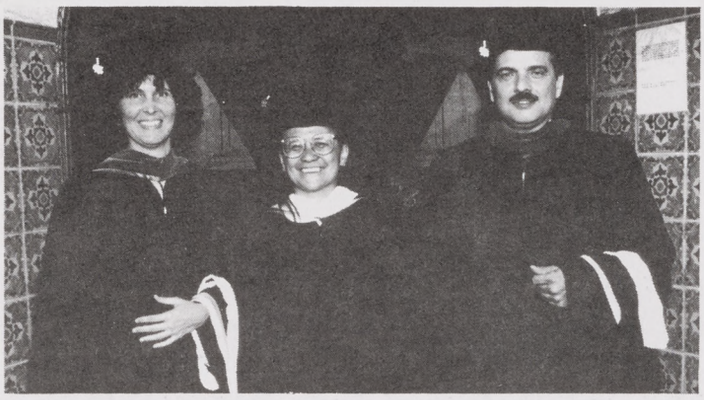


Photo by Mr. Bill Doggett

Samaritan College conferred Bachelor of Theology degrees upon, from left, Rev. Lori Dick, Rev. Christen Chew, and Dr. Joseph Piccari at U.S. graduation in June in Los Angeles, CA.

Samaritan

(continued from page 1)

with 18 from Mexico and seven from the United States.

Rev. Herbert Evans, transfer clergy from Long Beach, CA, summed up many of the thoughts and feelings of this year's students when he gave the closing homily in San Rafael:

"We've been opened up to new possibilities and options. We've been given new systems and tools to incorporate in our churches and communities... We are wiser than when we arrived. We've been blessed by a caring faculty who sacrificed in many instances to be here. We are the largest class — the class with the most people of color — we are a part of history in Samaritan College's life; and we've been noticed in our denomination."

Samaritan also announced that the "Introduction To Sexuality Studies" course is offered beginning in October in three districts. For details, contact: NWD, Rev. Wilson (503) 281-8868; MAD, Rev. Stock (202) 387-5230; SWD, Rev. West (214) 526-6221. ❐

Elders Proclaim Vision

(continued from page 1)

is firmly committed to seeing this happen and aggressively pursuing fulfillment of the goal."

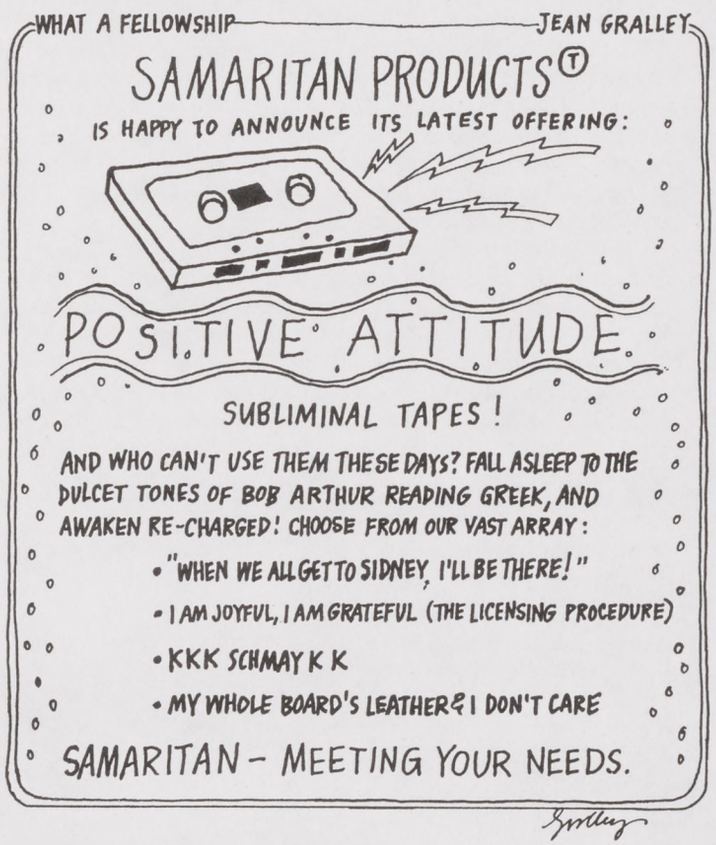
Churches are already responding to recent direct contact by the elders, including Moderator Troy Perry, to solicit funds for WCE. For example, Rev. Eastman noted that King of Peace MCC in St. Petersburg, FL, recently pledged $200 a month with a goal of contributing $10,000 annually to WCE.

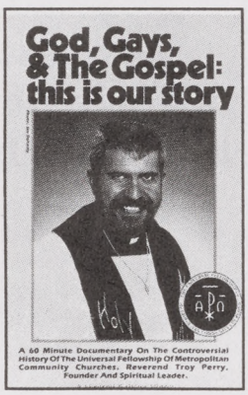
Meanwhile, WCE is being financed by tithe income that is above what was budgeted and deficit spending that is mandated in the budget approved by General Council, Rev. Eastman said. To cut costs, the elders met at local churches and UFMCC headquarters instead of in a hotel for the first time since 1983.

Elders' Roles Reviewed

A major portion of the elders' meeting was spent discussing the role of elders, including their individual job descriptions.

"We have the goal of moving to greater accountability to each other and to the Fellowship," Rev. Eastman said. To reach this goal, he said the elders are developing a document on their ministry. They plan to make the document available Fellowship-wide. ❐





Now more than ever we need to tell our story

God, Gays & The Gospel: This is Our Story

UFMCC Church Services is offering this 60-minute video documentary on UFMCC at the special discount price of $19.95 (regularly $59.95) while supplies last. (Add $3 for shipping; CA residents add $1.65 sales tax.)

Keeping in Touch is a monthly publication of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. We are a church of the lesbian and gay community, open to all. Our mission is to call people to new life through the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ, confront injustice through Christian social action, and create a community of healing and reconciliation.

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Send address changes, news and ideas to: *Keeping in Touch*, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd, #304, Los Angeles, CA 90029; (213) 464-5100.

Editorial Board:
Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry, Moderator
Mr. Ravi Verma, Director of Administration
Rev. Kittredge Cherry, Editor

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Ms. Nancy Fackrell, Typesetting

Around The Fellowship

Praises

Rev. Hong Tan, European North Sea District Coordinator, was presented to Princess Diana June 14 at a national conference on children and HIV in the United Kingdom. Rev. Tan served as a consultant for development of sex education resources.

The **Women's Secretariat** in the **Great Lakes District** provided an MCC presence at the Michigan Women's Music Festival, Aug. 10-16.

ESE, a major international Spanish-language news agency, spread news of a declaration by **ICM Buenos Aires**, Argentina, to the Spanish-speaking world in late July. The declaration opposed a Vatican document saying that discrimination against gay men and lesbians is sometimes justified.

The **Gulf Lower Atlantic District** has applied on behalf of the six North Carolina MCC's for membership in the state's Council of Churches. ❐

Positions Available

New Hope MCC is seeking a part-time pastor. Send resumes by Nov. 1 to Judy Conover, Clerk, New Hope MCC, P. O. Box 11278, Santa Rosa, CA 95406.

MCC Austin, TX, is looking for a full-time program director. For information, phone (512) 416-1170 or write 425 Woodward St., Austin, TX 78704.

Safe Harbour MCC, a new work in Halifax, Nova Scotia, is seeking a part-time pastor. Submit resumes to Bruce Moore, 5535 Black St., Halifax, NS, B3K 1P7 Canada.

Excel International is looking for an executive director. Send resumes by Dec. 1 to Amy Fulton, Clerk, Executive Committee, Rt. 3, Box 3437, Trinity, TX 75862. ❐

In Memory

Mr. Sean-Patrick Hogan

Mr. Sean-Patrick Hogan of Chicago, IL, an active leader in the Great Lakes District for many years, died of AIDS on Aug. 8.

Mr. Hogan, who was a student clergy, had recently been named pastoral advisor of South Suburban Fellowship MCC in Park Forest, IL. He was also coordinator of the John Hose Center, a special work in the district focusing on church research, leadership, Christian dialogue, clergy care and social action.

Mr. Hogan's church activities included being a lay delegate and serving on a variety of committees and task forces at Good Shepherd Parish MCC in Chicago and at the district level. He also served on UFMCC's Commission on Faith, Fellowship and Order.

Mr. Hogan is survived by his spouse, Mr. Barry Cecconi. A memorial service will be held this fall, conducted by District Coordinator Judy Dale. ❐

Prayers

Mr. Robert Eugene Lamoreaux, father of **Rev. Frodo Okulam**, died June 8 at age 70 following a battle with cancer. Rev. Okulam is pastor of **SisterSpirit**, a special ministry of UFMCC in Portland, OR.

Mrs. Helen Van Doren, mother of **Rev. Bob Darst**, died July 23 of cancer. Rev. Darst is pastor of **New Life MCC**, Charlotte, NC.

Rev. Barbara Freeman, pastor of **MCC Little Rock**, AR, is recovering from major abdominal surgery on July 13. ❐

Top 20 Tithes - July 1992

1.	MCC Los Angeles, Culver City, CA	US$	2,260.33
2.	Church/Holy Spirit MCC, Ft. Lauderdale, FL		2,021.72
3.	MCC of the Resurrection, Houston, TX		1,933.64
4.	MCC Washington, Washington, DC		1,891.34
5.	MCC Toronto, Ontario, Canada	CAN$	1,704.39
6.	MCC San Francisco, San Francisco, CA		1,451.97
7.	MCC Key West, Key West, FL		1,404.15
8.	St. Luke's MCC, Jacksonville, FL		1,210.90
9.	King of Peace MCC, St. Petersburg, FL		1,180.43
10.	First MCC of Kansas, Wichita, KS		1,146.34
11.	River City MCC, Sacramento, CA		1,066.95
12.	MCC of Greater Kansas City, Kansas City, MO		1,013.10
13.	MCC Tampa, Tampa, FL		991.08
14.	All God's Children MCC, Minneapolis, MN		850.08
15.	Agape' MCC, Ft. Worth, TX		845.81
16.	Church of the Trinity MCC, Sarasota		749.12
17.	Church of Our Savior MCC, Boca Raton, FL		719.70
18.	MCC New York, New York City, NY		697.49
19.	MCC Las Vegas, Las Vegas, NV		560.66
20.	First MCC of Atlanta, Atlanta, GA		531.36

Top 20 Per Capita - July 1992

1.	New Life MCC, Berkeley, CA	US$	53.54
2.	Maranatha Fellowship MCC, Houston, TX		40.44
3.	MCC Silverlake, Los Angeles, CA		33.60
4.	MCC Los Angeles, Culver City, CA		31.84
5.	MCC Key West, Key West, FL		30.20
6.	Open Arms MCC, Rochester, NY		29.78
7.	Good Samaritan MCC, Whittier, CA		27.74
8.	MCC of the Gentle Shepherd, Vancouver, WA		24.96
9.	Church of the Resurrection MCC, Chicago, IL		24.71
10.	Church With A Vision MCC, Longview, TX		24.41
11.	MCC of the Disciples, Washington, DC		23.96
12.	St. Francis & St. Clare MCC, Sioux Falls, SD		23.83
13.	All Saints MCC of Atlanta, Atlanta, GA		22.25
14.	MCC of Northern Virginia, Falls Church, VA		22.00
15.	Faith Eternal MCC, Springfield, IL		21.36
16.	Open Door MCC, Rockville, MD		20.96
17.	MCC Roseburg, Roseburg, OR		20.49
18.	Pikes Peak MCC, Colorado Springs, CO		20.25
19.	MCC Washington, Washington, DC		19.83
20.	MCC San Jose, San Jose, CA		19.35

{These figures reflect the 10 percent of each local church's income that is reported to Fellowship headquarters by the 10th of the following month}

Day of Commemoration Declared

Every UFMCC church is strongly urged to declare a Day of Commemoration in October to reflect on the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Western hemisphere 500 years ago.

The Day of Commemoration was recommended in a binding resolution passed by the 1992 General Conference, and is affirmed by Rev. Elder Troy Perry, founder and moderator, in a pastoral letter that he is sending to all UFMCC churches. The General Council designated Oct. 11 as the Day of Commemoration on the UFMCC calendar.

The resolution, sponsored by the Department of People of Color, states, "There have been acts of genocide, ecocide, economic exploitation and rape of human and mineral resources, for the indigenous people of the world whose subsequent legacy has been the perpetuation of paternalism and racism into our culture and times."

The General Board of the National Council of Churches (USA) adopted a similar resolution. It notes that the Church generally accompanied and legitimized this conquest and exploitation, and it calls for reflection and action to bring forward the silenced interpretation of the 1492 event.

Resources available for reflecting on Columbus' arrival include "1992 — A Faithful Response," a resource packet of 16 items available from the National Council of Churches (USA). The packet includes perspective articles, litany of worship, bibliography, specific ideas for implementation and the NCC resolution. It may be ordered from the NCC Prophetic Justice Unit, Room 572, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115. ❐

Diversity Celebrated in Many Ways

Networking For Evangelism

The two MCC's in the state of Utah are joining together to promote evangelism and "Christ-centered ministries."

Resurrection MCC in Salt Lake City and MCC Bridgerland in Logan are sponsoring the First Annual Intermountain Conference on Evangelism Nov. 6-8 in Salt Lake City. The conference will be headlined by Rev. Elder Freda Smith. She is vice moderator of UFMCC's Board of Elders, executive director of evangelism for UFMCC, and pastor of River City MCC in Sacramento, CA.

In addition, workshops will be presented by Rev. Dr. Buddy Truluck and Rev. Austin Amerine, with music by Vision and Rev. Larry Dunlap. The Conference will include lectures and workshops on evangelism, stewardship, church planting, music, Bible study, small groups, recovery groups, visitation ministries and "closing the back door" to retain church members. About 50 people have already indicated interest in attending.

Earlier this year pastors of the two Utah churches formed the Good News Network, a loosely organized network of "Christ-centered ministers and ministries within UFMCC united for prayer, support and healing." The goal is for members to support each other by sharing program ideas and praying for each other, explained Rev. Bruce Barton, pastor of Resurrection MCC, and Mr. Kelly Byrnes, pastor of MCC Bridgerland. The network has approximately 30 official members, with total participation of nearly 100.

"Our participants are all working in Christ-centered and Biblically based ministries within our Fellowship that are working in very diverse settings to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to do so through sharing the beliefs of the UFMCC as found in the international bylaws," they said.

They encourage people to consider participation in the network if they are willing to be a one-on-one prayer partner, if they need a prayer partner, if they have a stewardship series or communion series that they want to share or study, if they are interested in establishing dialogue on current issues (diversity, liturgies, social action, charismatics, Mormons, etc.), or if they are interested in ecumenical networking or church planting. "The network came about as an answer to prayer," they said.

For more information about the evangelism conference and/or the Good News Network, call Rev. Barton or Mr. Byrnes at (801) 595-0052. ❐

Searching For Historical Jesus

The Jesus Seminar, a 200-member group of mainline Biblical scholars from throughout the United States, has suggested that Jesus most likely did not say many of the words attributed to him in the Gospels. The Jesus who emerges from their research told parables and made meaningful comments.

A few UFMCC churches and districts are beginning to teach the findings of the Jesus Seminar.

A workshop based on the Jesus Seminar was offered at the Southwest District Conference in May. The Northwest District also presented Jesus Seminar material when seminar member Marcus Borg of Oregon State University served as one of the speakers at the 1989 conference.

The Southwest District workshop was taught by Rev. Stephen Moore, associate pastor of MCC in the Valley, North Hollywood, CA. It was based on classes and a sermon series that have been well received at MCC in the Valley.

"The whole church was on fire with it," said Rev. Sherre Boothman, pastor. "The first class scared them to death and by the end they loved it."

Rev. Moore taught the series of classes on the Jesus Seminar at MCCV in early 1991 and again in early 1992. "For me, the focus is to hear the authentic voice of Jesus and get back to a Jewish understanding of metaphor," he said. "Jesus taught in metaphor, which means everything Jesus taught will be heard differently by every single person who hears it. There's no one answer."

He begins the classes with a study of how the Gospels were written and a comparison of parallel Gospel passages. "Then we read the original core teachings of Jesus and everyone does their own interpretation of them and everyone's interpretation is validated and upheld," Rev. Moore said.

Classes have been so popular that MCCV offered a sermon series on the Jesus Seminar this year.

"Any MCC person, regardless of their church or theology, is probably in MCC because somewhere somebody told them the Bible condemned homosexuality and at some level they believed it," Rev. Boothman explained. "Homosexuality is just the tip of the iceberg. The Jesus Seminar sets people free of artificial authorities."

More information about the Jesus Seminar is available from MCC in the Valley, 5730 Cahuenga Blvd., N. Hollywood, CA 91601 or from Jesus Seminar, Westar Institute, P.O. Box 1526, Sonoma, CA 95476. ❐